

A divine prescription: against all the tenets of science, it worked

OFTEN, we tend to write off beliefs, claiming to know all about it. But it is the lack of knowledge or experience that makes us rebuff them.

Spirituality is something that seems to evoke extreme reactions. People either believe it or belittle it. Some are unwilling to expand their sphere of knowledge, while others learn from it and grow.

Coming from a practitioner of surgery and science, this might sound odd, but the truth is all human beings encounter a spiritual experience at some time or the other. I was one of the fortunate ones to go beyond my personal belief in medicine and accept spirituality as a reality.

On August 1, 1984, Sunder was operated for a hole in his stomach. The operation although a serious one, was carried out successfully.

Initially, the patient responded well. But by the end of a week, the repair came undone. The patient was put on another treatment, but it did not help. I expected the body's natural healing process to begin within three weeks. Unfortunately, it did not happen and the patient's condition began deteriorating.

As the days went by, the patient suffered even more and I watched helplessly. Sunder, an affluent man, had the best medical treatment plus a personal nurse at his disposal and yet, nothing could be done to help him.



STORY OF MY PATIENT

DR NARENDRA TRIVEDI

Senior Surgeon and Vice-President,
Lilavati Hospital & Research
Centre, Mumbai

Sitting in my consulting room, I was pondering over his state and beginning to feel defeated, when a friend walked in. He asked me the reason for my anxiety and I told him about my sinking patient.

He suggested that I visit a sadhu who did penance in the jungles of the Borivali National Park.

I did not have much faith in *sadhus* or *babas* owing to my medical background. But out of desperation, I decided — albeit reluctantly — to go along.

We found the *baba* sitting under a tree. Tattered clothes and unkempt hair, eyes shut in deep meditation, he seemed lost in another world.

When he opened his eyes, he asked us the reason for the visit. My friend told him

about my patient. The *baba* closed his eyes and went in a trance for a couple of minutes. It was around four o'clock at the time.

On opening his eyes, told us to put a teaspoon of sugar water in the patient's mouth and assured us that he would be fine. What the *baba* was suggesting was against the medical treatment I was giving him, as Sunder was not allowed to take anything orally. So dismissing his advice, I returned to the hospital.

When I inquired about Sunder's condition, his personal nurse, Mary, came to me all shaken up and told me she had deviated from my orders. She had given the patient a teaspoonful of sugar water at around four o'clock, the exact time I was with the *baba*. I was stunned. When I asked her what prompted her to take that step, she said she had been praying to God and He told her to do so. I walked away bewildered.

The next day, a bigger surprise awaited me. When I got to the hospital, I learnt that Sunder had started improving. And I watched in wonder as he recovered completely within a week and was ready to go home. This was nothing short of a miracle.

Spirituality truly does transcend all barriers of caste, creed and religion. How else can one explain the fact that a Hindu *baba* and a Christian nurse received the same message from two supposedly different sources?

Miracles like these do oc-

cur; all you need to do is believe in them. This is not to say that medicine and science are hogwash. Thanks to development in these fields, mankind has progressed and the benefits are numerous. But sometimes, you do need a little help from above.